



LOEP UPDATE

APRIL-MAY 2000 ISSUE

BENNETT C. LANDRENEAU
MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

MICHAEL L. BROWN
COLONEL (LA)
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

TORNADOES DESTROY HOMES IN LOUISIANA PARISHES

Severe storms brought devastating tornadoes to many parts of Louisiana in March and April. Hundreds of homes and businesses have been damaged or totally destroyed and many people were left without shelter following the aftermath.

On March 15, 2000, sometime around 2 p.m., a tornado touched down in the heart of Houma, LA, in Terrebonne Parish. The tornado was responsible for demolishing a TG&Y store and tearing roofs off of several homes and damaging others. The scene was one out of the movies as emergency crews and disaster assessment teams from the state and local Offices of Emergency Preparedness surveyed the tornado stricken areas.

Thirty-one injuries were reported and fortunately most required only minor medical treatment. A shelter was opened at the Houma Municipal Auditorium and provided comfort for over 50 people forced to seek refuge for the night.

Terrebonne Parish OEP Director Michael Deroche commented, "Things could have been much worse. The tornado could have hit three schools or a more populated area, and at that time of day, many people were on the road." Deroche went on to say, "I sure was glad to see some familiar faces from the state come down here to give us a hand. Scott Deselle and Billy Douglas (from LOEP's Disaster Recovery division) were here within a couple of hours of the tornado moving through. I guess the first night we walked the streets and must have looked at well over a hundred tornado damaged homes. Some had the roofs torn right off. It was good to hear from all the OEP directors that called to see if they could help."

Not to be outdone, several northern parishes of the state experienced their own tornado activity in

the evening hours of Easter Sunday in late April.

Tornado activity and severe storms caused damage to nearly 200 homes and businesses in Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, LaSalle, Natchitoches and Webster Parishes. Over 33,000 homes were left without power in the tornado stricken areas. Power company workers restored electricity to most of the homes by Wednesday of the same week.

Twenty-five injuries were reported with one being severe due to a house collapsing on a woman as she was seeking shelter from the tornado.

Debris cleanup continues in many affected areas by Louisiana Army National Guard crews. Heavy construction equipment including dump trucks and front end loaders were brought in to assist the cleanup efforts. Generators were also brought in to assist the Union Grove Water District left without power following the tornado. Debris removal operations were completed in Bossier and Caddo Parishes and the NG relocated equipment to other areas.

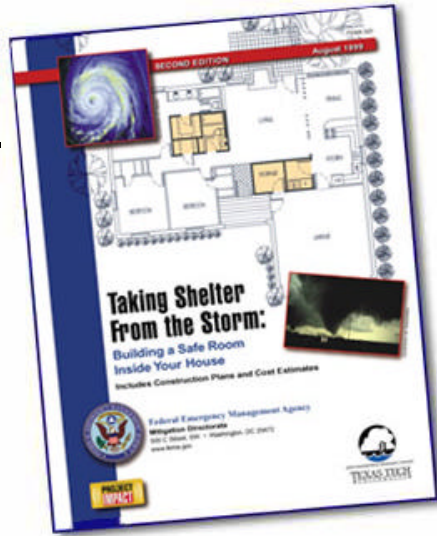
Damage assessment continues and joint State and Federal teams have begun Public Assistance assessments and qualification inspections for possible SBA assistance in accessible areas. Preliminary assessments in affected communities determined that many uninsured homes were heavily damaged.



**Take Shelter from the Storm:
Build a Safe Room.**



Residential Safe Rooms New Expanded 2nd Edition



Developed in collaboration with the Wind Engineering Research Center of Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas, Taking Shelter from the Storm – Building a Safe Room Inside Your House - FEMA 320, includes construction plans and cost estimates.

These shelters are designed to provide near absolute protection to you and your family from the high winds expected during tornadoes and hurricanes and from associated flying debris, such as 2"x4" wood studs, that tornadoes and hurricanes usually create.

To order a copy of this booklet and the accompanying construction plans and specifications, call 1-888-565-3896 and request a copy of publication FEMA 320.

* * *

National Hurricane Conference 2000 New Orleans, LA

Over 1,500 people from around the nation and several foreign countries gathered in New Orleans, LA at the Hyatt Regency Hotel for this year's National Hurricane Conference held April 17-21.

Many participants attended FEMA sponsored emergency management courses: Basic Public Information Officer, EOC Operations, Debris Management and others. Many of the courses were instructed by LOEP and parish OEP staff members.

Vendors from around the country provided participants of the conference with information and demonstrations of their emergency related products. Manufacturers were on-hand to show the latest in mobile command centers utilizing an expandable tractor trailer rig.

* * *

See our web-site for more information. <http://www.loep.state.la.us>

LOEP Training Schedule – FFY 2000 May through June

Course	Location	Date
Effective Communications / Basic PIO	Bossier City, LA	May 15-19
LEPA Conference	Gonzales, LA	May 22-25
Hurricane Exercise	Gonzales, LA	May 31
Disaster Response & Recovery Ops III	Lafayette, LA	June 6-8

FEMA Wants Higher Borrowing Ceiling National Flood Insurance



**NATIONAL
FLOOD
INSURANCE
PROGRAM**

FEMA wants to raise the ceiling on what the National flood Insurance Program (NFIP) can borrow from the Department of the Treasury from \$1 billion to "at least \$1.5 billion" to reduce the possibility of the program not being able to cover a large number of claims when there is a catastrophic flooding event.

Director James Lee Witt says it would be even better to let NFIP's borrowing authority "float as a percentage of the total amount of insurance in force."

FEMA is targeting 10,000 properties flooded repeatedly and needs \$450 million to buy out, elevate or otherwise mitigate these flood-prone homes covered by the NFIP that are the most susceptible to repeat flooding. Louisiana ranks highest on the list with 3,086 structures followed by Texas with 1,351 structures. New Jersey, Florida, New York and Missouri have over 3,700 homes combined.

* * *

Governor Foster Proclaims June "Hurricane Awareness Month"

Now is the time to get your community actively involved in hurricane preparations. Take this opportunity to prepare disaster kits and familiarize yourself with emergency procedures and evacuation routes. Don't forget animal shelter planning.

